

*Kingston, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Kingston Mayor Jim Sottile today joined Ulster BOCES Youthbuild officials and participants for the grand opening of the organization's first environmentally-friendly house, which is made almost solely out of green materials. The grand opening took place at the site of the recently completed home located at 136 Prospect Street in Kingston, New York.

"In addition to providing young adults in the county with an education and new skill set, the Ulster BOCES YouthBuild program has turned a vacant housing project into a beautiful new environmentally-friendly home that can serve as a model for other construction projects in the Hudson Valley," Hinchey said. "The participants in this program are coming away from this experience with a GED degree, new skills that will help them obtain future employment in the construction industry, and the satisfaction of knowing they helped to give back to their community by constructing a 'green' property that will now be a bright spot in Kingston. The entire Ulster County community is benefitting from this program by having a more educated and skilled population, new environmentally-friendly housing that will cost less to operate and maintain, and a more unified community."

The housing project at 136 Prospect Street in Kingston started with a house that was donated to YouthBuild by the City of Kingston. The site was originally planned as a rehabilitation project, but because of the level of deterioration inside the house, the initiative quickly evolved into a new construction project. The situation thus allowed for YouthBuild to be able to construct a house using green building technologies/products that will make the house energy efficient. The house features Energy Star appliances; an energy efficient heating system, windows, plumbing fixtures, and water heater; and recycled blue jeans insulation.

Hinchey has been a longtime supporter of the YouthBuild program, which allows young adults to earn their GEDs while also learning construction skills as they rehabilitate housing in their neighborhood. The congressman has been an outspoken advocate of funding from Congress for YouthBuild. Hinchey supported the Obama administration's request for an increase in funding for the YouthBuild program, which provided the funding needed to complete the housing construction project.

Since the YouthBuild program started in Ulster County in 1994, Hinchey has joined the organization in celebrating the accomplishments of the young people who participate in the program. The congressman has attended multiple grand openings and construction events throughout Ulster County. In 2003, Ulster BOCES YouthBuild failed to receive an expected

federal grant. Hinchey subsequently organized a meeting for the organization with officials from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) during which he advocated on behalf of the organization. Hinchey very passionately presented Ulster BOCES Youthbuild's case to HUD, outlining all the areas that had been overlooked in the original application. HUD subsequently awarded funding to Ulster BOCES YouthBuild.